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ABSTRACT

Controversy surrounding the accountability movement is related to how the movement began in response to dissatisfaction with public schools. Opponents see it as one-sided, somewhat mean-spirited, and a threat to the professional status of teachers. Supporters argue that all other spheres of the workplace have accountability systems and that the problem with public schooling is its failure to be accountable to anyone for its products. Neither position, taken to the extreme, seems true nor very productive. As Andrew Porter notes in the opening interview, accountability systems cannot be one-sided. They must include multiple and reciprocal expectations among all the actors and stakeholders. What happens when an entire school or school system is deemed a failure at its task? Kent Peterson's contribution points out how school reconstitution must proceed carefully and thoughtfully if it is to work. Carole Anne Heart's piece tells the true story of how a group of American Indian parents became active advocates for improving their children's inadequate schooling. Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood's case study of an entire school district's transformation shows how intelligent, carefully planned reform can succeed when tailored to the needs of a district's student population. The issue contains a planning tool for school staff to guide leaders as they plan an accountability strategy. (Contains 13 references.) (DFR)

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COMPREHENSIVE CENTER REGION-VI

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COMPREHENSIVE CENTER–REGION VI

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

ACCOUNTABILITY ENTAILS A COMPLEX SET OF INTERLOCKING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS—LIKE AN INFORMAL PROMISE OR A MORE FORMAL CONTRACT. WHEN SOMEONE PROMISES TO DO SOMETHING, THE OTHER PERSON ASSUMES THAT THE PROMISE WILL BE FULFILLED TO MINIMAL STANDARDS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT MY OLDER SON OFFERS TO MOW THE LAWN, I WOULD EXPECT HIM NOT TO LEAVE SWATHES OF UNMOWED LAWN FOR ME TO HANDLE. THE PERSON MAKING THE OFFER, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THAT PROMISE WILL BE FULFILLED AND WHAT (S)HE WILL RECEIVE IN RETURN FOR FULFILLING IT: MY SON WOULD EXPECT THE LAWN MOWER TO BE IN WORKING CONDITION AND TO RECEIVE A PRINCELY SUM ON FINISHING HIS END OF THE BARGAIN. THE CONSEQUENCES OF MY SON'S FAILURE TO MOW THE LAWN LIKE HE HAD PROMISED COULD RANGE FROM THE FRAYING OF A FATHER/ADOLESCENT-SON FRIENDSHIP TO MORE FORMAL AGREED-UPON SANCTIONS.

An accountability system formalizes the above, often tacit set of agreements so that there are formal ways through which people can determine whether a promise has been fulfilled, whether it could have been fulfilled under the conditions in place, and so that there are formal rewards and sanctions in the event that the promise is fulfilled or not.

Parents of school children, the taxpaying public, teachers, other school personnel and interested stakeholders often have assumed that public schools are promising something in return for public support. An oft-told story, however, is that these different parties hold competing expectations about what has been promised (is it teaching or is it student learning?), the consequences that should be tied to that promise, and the conditions under which that promise should be fulfilled. The accountability movement is an effort to make explicit, to the various parties, what

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Who Is Accountable for Academic Achievement?: An Interview With Andrew C. Porter

[anne turnbaugh lockwood]

Who should shoulder primary responsibility for students' performance in school? If students fail to achieve to desired standards set by schools, communities, and states, what consequences are desirable—and for whom? How do educational stakeholders ensure that these safeguards are both effective and equitable? Finally, what special accommodations, if any, should be extended to students from high-poverty households, whose native language is not English, or who enter school with other disparities that may diminish their academic performance?

We asked these and other questions of Andrew C. Porter, Director of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Director of the National Institute for Science Education, and Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Porter was on the faculty at Michigan State University for 21 years; nine years as Co-Director of the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) and six years as Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Study. From 1974 to 1976, he was at the National Institute of Education in Washington, D.C., first as a visiting scholar and finally as Associate Director of Basic Skills research. His research spans the areas of research on teaching; education policy analysis; student and teacher assessment; and psychometrics, especially the problem of measuring change. Work on these areas has led to over 100 publications and technical reports. He has served on nine editorial boards of scholarly journals and held numerous offices and committee assignments in professional organizations. A member of the National Academy of Education, Porter currently serves on numerous advisory boards for national research centers and studies.

Although accountability currently enjoys a prominent position in the national educational spotlight, many readily admit that it is a topic encumbered with complexity and intricacy—shrouded in the mystique of assessment and statistics. Parents and other educational stakeholders outside the school may applaud the rhetoric that argues that teachers and schools assume new responsibility for student performance. However, teachers struggling against structural odds that influence the quality of their teaching could be alarmed by the possibility of punitive consequences if low-performing students in their classrooms do not improve or are unable to achieve at desired levels. And low-performing students who come from impoverished households—or whose native language is not English—face the daunting possibility that their academic success may be stunted and their futures blighted, through no fault of their own.

Andrew C. Porter approaches the topic of accountability in a carefully reasoned and balanced manner, first focusing on the most fundamental question: Who should be held accountable for academic achievement—and for what purpose?

"Should we hold students accountable for what they know?," Porter asks. "Or should we hold teachers and schools accountable for providing the kinds of services and supports to students that give them a good opportunity to learn what we want them to know?"

Porter believes that in its ideal form, accountability for student achievement should not be an either/or situation—in which the burden for improved outcomes is laid solely on the school or the student. Instead, he maintains that carefully crafted symmetry is key to any thoughtful, effective, and useful accountability strategy.

"Accountability," he explains, "ought to be symmetric. Students should be held accountable for their academic performance—but schools and teachers also should be accountable for that same performance."

He notes that student achievement is a joint product of student effort, work, and performance, combined with teacher/school effort and expertise. "Just to hold one stakeholder accountable and not the other seems potentially unfair to the one who is being held accountable," he emphasizes.

This type of inequity—far too common in practice—clearly concerns Porter, whose research has included pioneering work on opportunity-to-learn standards. These standards, Porter explains, represented an effort to ensure that no educational stakeholder would be penalized in the current push for heightened accountability for improved student outcomes. Although opportunity-to-learn standards ultimately were jettisoned at the national level, he remains convinced that they were based on sound, necessary premises

intended to protect students and teachers from possible inequities.

"Opportunity-to-learn standards were intended to protect students in instances where the stakes could be high," Porter explains. "If students are to be held to high stakes, we need to make sure that schools deliver an adequate opportunity to learn."

There is some lack of symmetry, he adds, embedded in their premise. "Students would be held accountable for their own achievement and schools would be held accountable for what they provide to students. One relates more to process; the other to product."

He points out how easily either group of educational stakeholders—teachers or students—could be held accountable for student achievement–with the other group left out. Unfortunately, this simplistic accountability easily could be unfair. "If the school fails the student in what it provides but the student isn't allowed to graduate—through no fault of his or her own—that's clearly not fair," Porter notes. "But if seniors do not take their twelfth-grade exam seriously and teachers and schools are held accountable for these students' performance, there aren't any stakes for the students, which also isn't fair."

IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

If school staff fail to boost student performance to the desired level as measured by the particular set of standards and benchmarks that have been sanctioned by the school, district, and state, what safeguards should be in place to help boost student performance? Should sanctions be employed for lowperforming schools and staff—or are there more benevolent and effective measures?

Porter argues that providing help for teachers of low-performing students is the most critical part of any improvement effort—but adds a pragmatic caveat. "It must be the *right* kind of help," he emphasizes. "Help is not always viewed as something positive, because it is easy to be labeled as needing help. People do not like that label, which can amount to carrying a stigma."

> ***"Instead of jumping in and believing that we have it right this time, we need to realize the enormity of the problems we face."***

However, Porter quickly adds that simply funneling technical assistance into a low-performing school or district isn't a panacea. "Just to provide help because a school or district is doing poorly and then ultimately to shut that school or district down if it does not improve is not the answer," he enlarges. "Kentucky, for example, began its accountability effort by giving bonuses to teachers: money that they could actually put in their own pockets. While Kentucky currently is beginning to give money directly to the school for discretionary spending, these bonuses do provide a strong example of an incentive for schools and staff when they succeed in raising student achievement."

Porter has another practical and philosophical consideration often ignored by policymakers and researchers when they discuss the importance of holding schools and students accountable for academic achievement. "What exactly *should* happen," he asks, "if schools do not improve? If we live in a district where all the schools are doing poorly, we can't close them all down. If, however, we live in a district where there is only one district that is struggling with these issues, it could be closed or reconstituted."

One reason that accountability is such an elusive concept for so many educational stakeholders, Porter argues, is that part of its logic is faulty. "The whole accountability movement is based on a strong belief that if we just try harder we will do better," he says. "There is certainly enough truth to that to give the belief some credibility, but sometimes people just don't know what to do. No matter how hard they try, they can't do it adequately.

"This is the soft underbelly of the accountability movement," he adds, "and instead of jumping in and believing that we have it right this time, we need to realize the enormity of the problems we face. Sadly, too many kids fail and too many schools fail. We need to think harder about what we will do about this serious problem to be able to solve it."

VARYING STANDARDS AND THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Content and performance standards vary widely state to state, district to district—and in some districts, are only a nascent effort. Given the proliferation of standards for both content and performance—and their widely differing emphases—how can schools or districts be held accountable for student performance in ways that are fair? If standards in one district differ dramatically from those in another district or state, how can stakeholders be confident that accountability measures are sufficient and equitable?

Assessment tightly aligned to curriculum and instruction is the way in which accountability strategies can be fair and unbiased, Porter says—but he warns all educational stakeholders to remember the ultimate goal: heightened student achievement. "We have to remember the concept of value added," he emphasizes. "Where are we taking these students? Where do we want them to go?"

Differences among students, he adds,

must not only be recognized, but be accommodated in an appropriate fashion [*for a discussion of accommodations, see the article by Walter G. Secada on page 12*]. "Students in California are among the lowest-achieving students in the nation," Porter notes, "but many of those students do not speak or read English as a first language. The tests, of course, are in English. To be fair about it, we must always ask: Where were they when we took them into the school and where were they when they left the school?"

He adds, "We can't compare their level of achievement directly to the level of achievement for students in Wisconsin and say that Wisconsin students are higher achievers, because it is not a fair comparison. A better comparison is a test of gains in achievement. One problem is that no state except for Tennessee follows students longitudinally. More typically, they test the new fourth graders each year, so the concept of value added isn't estimable."

UNDERSTANDING VALUE ADDED

The concept of value added, Porter says, is at its core very simple. If, for example, a mathematics teacher begins working with a group of students in the Fall after testing them to assess what they already know, and then tests them again in the Spring to see what they have learned, the gain between Fall and Spring is considered the value added.

He cautions, "All of that gain cannot be attributed to what the teacher did. Obviously, students will gain something simply by getting older and that is where the concept of value added begins to get tricky. The tricky part has to do with what portion of the gain was contributed by the school. For that reason, psychometricians ask: If the student had attended a different school, would the gain have been different?"

The gain, Porter says, for a particular school is compared to an average across schools. "That difference from the average in gain is called the value added."

But in order to ensure that assessment is fair and the estimate of value added is accurate, accommodations for socioeconomic status (SES) must be made—as well as accommodations for other factors such as language minority status. In what ways can these accommodations be the most equitable?

In his response, Porter focuses on SES. "The thinking of psychometricians," he observes, "is that SES remains constant over a period of time. Because of that, rather than controlling directly for SES on achievement measures, it is better to use students' prior achievement. Prior achievement not only controls for the influence of SES on achievement, but controls for other influences on achievement besides SES."

Realizing the import of the swelling numbers of so-called special populations also influences both the concept of value added and the accuracy of assessments used as part of an accountability scheme, Porter adds. "We try to make an accommodation for a student that will give us a more valid measure of what the student knows and can do. We don't want to accommodate the student in a way that changes the construct being measured."

He illustrates with an example. "If we give the special needs student more time, do we still get a measure that means the same thing as for a student we didn't accommodate under a timed condition? Knowing the answer to that question is very difficult.

"The nature of accommodations—and who should be accommodated—is not standardized, so there are considerable differences between states," he continues.

Accommodations and the types of assessments used also need to mesh, Porter underscores. "Can multiple choice,

"These tests do measure performance, but performance needs to remain first and foremost achievement and not slide into an assessment of verbal IQ."

true/false achievement tests measure all of the things we think are important? Do we need to have more performance-based assessment added to the mix? Of course we do. It is very rare now to find a test that is completely multiple choice."

But performance-based assessments can present their own thorny mix of problems. "The biggest landmine is that these tests are interesting and revolve around content that students haven't studied in quite the way that is being measured," Porter points out. "For that reason, they can end up being highly correlated with verbal IQ. When this happens, they are not so much an achievement measure as a general verbal aptitude test."

This is a major pitfall, Porter emphasizes, because the core of any accountability system is to arrive at what students have accomplished and how well they can work with the content they have learned. "These tests do measure performance, but performance needs to remain first and foremost achievement and not slide into an assessment of verbal IQ."

TEACHER UNIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Since many accountability strategies place teachers and schools in the most responsible roles—without providing adequate supports—it is certainly conceivable that teacher unions would stand firmly against direct teacher accountability. However, Porter is heartened by a slighter different vision of teacher accountability backed by both the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA).

"There is a great deal of enthusiasm for teacher assessments," he says, "that leads to skills-based pay programs. This is a form of teacher accountability, but it's not teacher accountability in terms of directly promoting gains in student achievement. It does make teachers accountable for increased knowledge and skills. Of course, the hypothesis is that one becomes a more effective teacher with increased knowledge and skills; consequently, there is more value added for students. But we need to remember it is an assumption and a hypothesis rather than a direct link."

THE PRESSURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The entire system that longs to hold someone accountable for student performance is suffering enormous strain, Porter says. "There is almost a competition among states and districts for the highest standards. No state wants to go on record that it has lower standards than another state. We want high content and performance standards. We want to set our achievement levels high as cut-off points on graduation tests."

But this raises the same practical concern Porter entertains about closing down all low-performing schools in the same district. "If standards on a graduation test are set high, and 90 percent of the students can't graduate, we have a big problem. Balancing that is considerable pressure to set the standards low enough so that some acceptable number graduates. When students have a very, very low starting place, they can improve a lot and still be beneath the standard. That is a fundamental tension within the accountability movement."

He adds, "It never will be resolved fully. It requires a constant negotiation of standards to arrive at some acceptable number of students who will meet the standard and who will fall below the standard."

THE FUTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

When accountability is considered within the broader context of the current wave of education reform, what does Porter think of its future? Is it likely to be a trend—fleeting and superficial? Or will it make a lasting mark on the American educational landscape?

In his reply, Porter returns to the concept that reformers often believe they have made the pivotal discovery that will set American education on the correct path. "I believe it would be much better if we took a continuous improvement approach," he says, "which admits we do not know all the answers but we do know some of them. Current reform certainly has more of that thinking than prior reform."

But two compelling reasons maintain the status quo, he says. "Alternatives cost a lot of money, and we are limited in the number of alternatives we can consider. Certain ideas under consideration, such as eliminating social promotion, might have a lasting effect but I'm not optimistic. Challenging content standards," he concludes, "and accountability for student achievement could be with us for a long time. Certainly there will be some change and some reaction to the change. But it is only positive to focus on what is being taught, how it is being taught, and how well it is being learned."

[about the author]

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A District's Transformation for Hispanic Youth: Accountability in Action

[anne turnbaugh lockwood]

In what ways can an entire school district fashion challenging educational experiences that bond students to school and to adults? What measures can be instituted to ensure that those experiences are maintained at consistently high quality? What considerations need to be in place when those students are at particularly high risk of academic failure due to socioeconomic variables, language proficiency, and related issues? In the following article, we present one school district's experience with a population that is predominantly Limited English Proficient (LEP), Hispanic, and at particular risk of dropping out of school entirely.

The Calexico School District is located in Calexico, California—a community with a population of approximately 25,000. Calexico hugs the Mexican border near Mexicali—which has a population of close to a million and is the closest large city.

Calexico's demographics typify those of many communities with high Hispanic dropout rates. Fifty-one percent of its 6,856 students are eligible for free and reduced lunch; approximately 30 percent are the children of migrants; the average household income is under $12,000; the unemployment rate is 25-35 percent; and approximately 80 percent of its students, K-12, are classified as limited English proficient. As in many communities throughout the United States, substance abuse and gangs are burgeoning threats.

Despite these factors, the Calexico School District holds a fistful of national awards and recognition for the programs it has developed to meet the special needs of its students. In 1996, at the time the work of the Hispanic Dropout Project was conducted, the dropout rate for Calexico High School was approximately 2.4 percent.

But this impressive record has a long, careful history. Calexico's secondary schools led the district's transformation in the late 1960s with a pioneering bilingual education program. In 1996, Calexico High School was in the fourth year of an ambitious restructuring plan that provided strong academics and emphasized future career possibilities for all students. The class of 1996 graduated 387 students—15% entered four-year universities, 64% enrolled in the local community college, 4% enrolled in trade or technical schools, and 8.5% entered the military.

Aurora Alternative High School, Calexico's continuation school and last hope for students at the highest risk of dropping out, is suffused with a philosophy that refuses to give up on its students. Instead, Aurora holds high academic and behavior standards for all students, working with them and with their families to build a sense of social and personal responsibility. The development of strong, workable plans for future education or entry into the workforce post-graduation is an integral part of the curriculum as is a project-oriented approach to learning.

Clearly, Calexico's insistence on high-quality, research-driven bilingual education, its continuous self-assessment and refinement of existing programs and strategies, and its

philosophy that problems are collective rather than individual, contributes to the success of its students—many of whom return to Calexico to become teachers in the district.

In this case study, selected district and secondary-level administrative and instructional staff discuss how the Calexico School District attained its present, impressive status through a district-wide and community-endorsed emphasis on a strong bilingual program, a high percentage of bilingual staff, rigorous academic and behavioral standards for all students, a move to heterogeneous grouping, and curricular practices that enlist students in the educative process. These curricular practices, staff believe, prepare students to deal with prejudice, teach them how to be successful academically, and build a sense of self-efficacy that will carry them into productive futures.

At the time the Hispanic Dropout Project conducted its work, the following respondents informed this case study:

- *Emily Palicio, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services for the Calexico School District;*
- *Harry Pearson, Principal of Calexico High School;*
- *Patrick Peake, Principal of Aurora Alternative High School;*
- *Juan Orduña, a mathematics and computer science teacher at Calexico High School;*
- *Gilbert Mendez, a Title I teacher at Calexico High School.*

When Emily Palicio, Calexico's Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, looks back at the Calexico schools she saw when she arrived in the district as a teacher in 1969, she remembers a time of low expectations, dismal student performance, and scant understanding of students' native language and culture. Despite Calexico's proximity to Mexico and its constant influx of immigrant students, not only were bilingual teachers virtually nonexistent, immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) students rarely reached college or achieved even a modicum of academic success.

Teachers, Palicio recalls, didn't expect LEP or non-English-speaking students to succeed in academic work. Primary instructional strategies were remediation, an instructional pace slowed to a crawl, and plenty of drill. Not surprisingly, these approaches failed to yield positive results.

Palicio still remembers her frustration. "I knew there had to be another way to teach," she says. "I knew the kids were not dumb, yet we lowered everything because they didn't know the language. We had low expectations and consequently students functioned at a low level. We did what everyone else in the country was doing and as a result, we produced limited bilinguals—students who were limited in English *and* limited in Spanish."

The lack of Hispanic staff was a serious impediment to academic success for Calexico students, she adds. "In my school," she says, "there were only two Hispanic teachers. I was one of them."

Palicio credits the development of a strong, research-based bilingual education program—in tandem with a commitment to hiring well-qualified bilingual staff—as the foundation for Calexico's shift to high expectations and academic rigor for all students. In fact, bilingual programs served as the catalyst for substantive reform in the Calexico schools.

HIRING BILINGUAL STAFF

The presence of bilingual staff throughout the district provides practical and symbolic testimony that students' native language and culture are valued, Palicio points out, and reflects the district's "value position" that staff respect and understand students' culture, language, and background.

"If students come to our schools and are told they can only speak one language, what we have done is invalidate what they have learned at home," Palicio points out. "Until students transition to English, they will have much higher self-esteem in bilingual programs, working with bilingual staff, than if they had been told that their language was wrong."

"Today, 85 percent of our elementary school teachers are bilingual; approximately 40 percent of our high school teachers are bilingual," she adds. "All our elementary school principals are bilingual; one of our two junior high school principals is bilingual as well."

Harry Pearson, Calexico High School's principal, points out another dimension of the district's bilingual staff. "We are experiencing a phenomenon," he notes with obvious pride. "Over the past 15 years, students who have come through our program and graduated from college have come home to teach—and they are very successful as teachers. They want to give back to the community."

COMMITMENT TO BILINGUAL PROGRAMS

The district's emphasis on bilingual education also had a profound influence on its educational philosophy.

When Title VII funding first made it possible to establish bilingual education programs, the Calexico School District wrote a proposal to solicit funds for a secondary-level program, rather than an elementary program, partly because the proposal writers recognized the potency of community sentiments against bilingual education at the elementary level.

"When you live in a border community where the primary language is Spanish," Palicio explains, "parents believe they are sending their kids to school to learn English. Why would we teach them in Spanish?"

Carefully basing its pilot bilingual program on the work of key researchers in bilingual education such as James Cummins, Steve Krashen, and Tracy Terrell, and beginning at the secondary level, the district witnessed a shift in

public attitudes in a relatively short period of time. Parents began to see LEP students who entered the Calexico schools in junior high or high school enter college—"within the first generation," Palicio emphasizes. This fast track to academic success impressed parents, who realized that before the advent of bilingual programs, students who went to college were almost exclusively middle class. In addition to a more privileged socioeconomic status, college-bound students tended to be second-and-third generation Hispanics.

Palicio notes that the high school program was the forerunner of the bilingual program that Calexico has today, "a true bilingual program," she adds. This pioneering project, "El CID," broke new ground at Calexico by mixing students who were proficient or native English-speakers with students whose primary language was Spanish.

When the district added its elementary bilingual program, its progress was informed by the way in which it implemented the secondary bilingual program.

"The elementary program truly was a bilingual program," Palicio says, "although the secondary program was definitely the forerunner for it." The program, which gradually encompassed the entire district, incorporated a Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) component, rarely encountered in bilingual programs. This SSL component was targeted toward students who had lost their proficiency in Spanish.

Teachers team-taught in the program; one teacher as the English model, another as the Spanish model. But success was far from certain. Lack of commitment to the program inside the district was an ongoing source of tension. "Most of the teachers were not bilingual," Palicio says. "We had a battle on our hands. Obviously, there was jealousy because we had funds from Title VII that the other program didn't have. We were embarking on a whole new philosophy, and it was not a popular philosophy. But suddenly, teachers working in the program saw a difference, and parents saw a difference too."

Long-held staff attitudes about the capabilities of LEP students changed dramatically as a direct result of bilingual programming. "We saw our students as active learners," she adds. "The kids who never participated began to participate. Suddenly they could read, because Spanish is a very easy, phonetic language in which to develop literacy. That created an excitement in all of us."

Harry Pearson, Calexico High School's principal, sees district commitment to bilingual education as a primary reason students stay in school. "At the high school, we have a very strong English Language Development (ELD) program," he explains. "Students receive this language development at the same time they receive their four subjects in their primary language or in sheltered English. It is possible for students to take the same curriculum that other students have in their primary language and move all the way through the system to graduation—which is a main factor in keeping many students in school."

However, all students must pass a proficiency test in English and complete a senior project to fulfill graduation requirements at Calexico High School. Since late-entry immigrants graduate with varying degrees of English language proficiency, they often continue their educations at the local community college where they further develop their English language skills.

Palicio believes that district commitment to bilingual education also validates parents and families. "These programs mean that parents can become involved in the literacy of their child. We also work to reach a nontraditional population in nontraditional ways. Our parents, by and large, didn't graduate from high school so they don't know how the system works. We have to demystify the system and make it accessible to them."

Making the system accessible translates to an intensely practical approach that emphasizes academic achievement and the importance of college. Almost 100 percent of the district's clerical staff and instructional aides are bilingual. "This provides parents with better access in their interactions with schools," Palicio notes. "They know they can go there and somebody is going to understand what they have to say."

The insistence on college and post-secondary education means that school staff inform parents—on an ongoing basis—what courses their children need to take to prepare for college admission. When students reach the college admissions process, they and their families are aided by counselors, if necessary.

"They assist them in filling out financial aid applications if needed," Palicio says. "Another system might say: If you want to go to college you come in and show up on Monday at 3 p.m. That is not going to work because the parents do not know what they have to do."

A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS REFINEMENT

The district's bilingual education program served as the starting point for its commitment to continuous refinement of existing programs. "It has been a transformation," Palicio says with gentle irony, "for 25 years. The difference at this district is that we have been into research and experimentation."

The district also has encouraged—and pushed—collaboration. "It may sound like a stereotype," Palicio acknowledges, "but bilingual teachers, by nature, are more collaborative in their approach. Moving to team teaching, therefore, wasn't a big deal for us. But in a traditional program where teachers see the classroom as their domain, it is much more difficult to break down those barriers."

Team teaching brought about a collective sense of responsibility throughout

the district, an ethos that problems were to be shared rather than handed off to someone else. "That changes the culture of the school," Palicio emphasizes. "In addition, our Title VII funds allowed us to bring in the best staff development. Because Title VII demanded an evaluation of our program, we were able to follow students longitudinally and see how they were doing.

"This longitudinal evaluation allowed us to look closely at what we were doing and what we needed to do differently. The funds provided us the release time to reflect about what we were doing and collaboratively to come up with solutions."

What about staff who resisted collaboration? Who didn't buy into bilingual education and the new philosophy that the schools needed to adapt to the needs of their students? Who rejected the district commitment to students' languages and cultures?

Attrition was helpful, Palicio notes. As older teachers gradually retired, the district had an opportunity to replace them with teachers who were willing to progress in the direction set by the district.

The district also demonstrated its commitment to the needs of its students. At one time, the district faced the possibility of teacher layoffs due to a projected shortfall in district funds. During the layoff process, the district made a decision that the layoffs would be based on student needs rather than teacher seniority. This decision—which saved bilingually certified teachers—sent a message through the community that the needs of the children of Calexico would come first in the priorities of the district. Although the layoffs were based on an administrative error and never occurred, the message retained its power, Palicio notes.

"The resistance was no longer so obvious," she recalls. "And when the push in the 1980s was to get kids into English as soon as possible, we were able to use that as leverage to include all of our teachers in training for LEP students. That sent the message that all our students needed assistance and support in becoming proficient in English. We were able to train the monolingual English teachers as well as the bilingual teachers."

Another obstacle vanished. "Now, we were talking about *our* children, not *those* children," she says.

CURRICULAR PRACTICES FOR ALL STUDENTS

In keeping with its philosophy of continuous refinement and improvement, Calexico High School and Aurora Continuation High School received one-year restructuring planning grants and five-year demonstration grants from the state of California four years ago—which has resulted in a revamped curriculum at the secondary level.

Tenth graders at Calexico High School take the same college-preparatory curriculum in academies; eleventh and twelfth graders are housed in four career path institutes and have the choice of fifteen career path majors from which to select. All classes within the academies are heterogeneously grouped. The academies house students with a cluster of four teachers (English/language arts, science, social science, and foreign languages) who work collaboratively with their colleagues from mathematics and physical education to meet the goals of each academy.

The institutes focus on investigations in engineering and technology, the environment and society, the visual and performing arts, and business and economics. "The important part of the institutes," Pearson states, "is that we are getting kids to focus on careers in a way that is meaningful. We are not looking just at amassing 220 credits for graduation from high school, but instead at a diploma that says they have some skills that will take them into the workplace."

Calexico staff are quick to acknowledge that they need to increase the numbers of LEP students in advanced math courses. Juan Orduña, a Calexico graduate who returned to teach mathematics and computers at Calexico High School, points out that although students are grouped heterogeneously, mathematics remains "naturally tracked" as courses become progressively more difficult.

"We continue to work on this," he says. "Some LEP students felt intimidated by the courses because they were afraid of the language barrier. But I believe that math is such a universal language that it has its own vocabulary. The language barrier can be downplayed or eliminated."

Orduña doesn't hesitate to switch into Spanish while teaching one of his calculus or math analysis classes if he sees that students are stumbling because of difficulty with English. "The concept is the important part," he says, "not the language."

BUILDING UPON SUCCESS

He also works to boost math achievement by building upon success. "I am a believer in success," he adds. "When you work with students and encourage them, you watch for success because it will then create more success.

"But," he adds emphatically, "I am also a believer in challenging students. I have developed a little culture within my classroom where kids feel free to come in and get extra help. Sometimes kids come in at 6 p.m., form little study groups, and do their work. Others come at 4:30 after their activities."

Obviously, this type of culture demands a willingness from Orduña to be available on an extended schedule from students—something to which he is committed. "The trick to getting kids to learn is making them believe in themselves," he notes. "Yes, you are somebody and you can accomplish your dream."

He adds pragmatically, "But then you have to make it possible for them to accomplish their dream. One way is to be around and help them on a regular basis."

One of Orduña's colleagues, Gilbert Mendez, works with students at Calexico High School—those considered at the highest risk of dropping out—in a computer-assisted program of instruction called the Academic Support class. "Part of the day they work with four teachers in the Academies," he observes, "and part of the day directly with me on writing, reading, or another skill."

Students, mostly tenth-graders, are identified for the program on the basis of their academic progress. If they are faltering, they are eligible for the Academic Support class. "They work 20 minutes at a time on the computer and the rest of the time either with my aide or with me. The computer time is tightly structured."

Mendez adds, "Keeping students in school is one thing. Keeping them interested is another.

"For that reason, I try different approaches. Some things are more successful than others, so it is necessary to continue to try new things. If we want to make education relevant, we have to tie it in with students' lives, conflicts, and ideas—not remain in the abstract."

Another important thread in the fabric of Calexico's success is the presence of Hispanic role models. As Orduña says, "Students that I work with don't see their ethnicity or their culture as a barrier to success. Many of our faculty, especially in the math department, are Hispanic. Our kids have grown up with role models. They have been taught to eliminate the view that their ethnicity or culture will interfere with their success. Plus, here are these folks who have succeeded. They are Hispanic—and yet they are as American as they can be.

"This reinforces the idea," Orduña adds, "that to succeed is great."

HIGH STANDARDS AND "BACK DOORS" FOR POTENTIAL DROPOUTS

Exemplifying Calexico's stance that it will not abandon its students—no matter how difficult their problems—is the philosophy and programs of its continuation high school, a philosophy which has developed over the past 24 years. Aurora Alternative High School came into being following state legislation that mandated continuation high schools in districts that had high school graduating classes that exceeded 100 students.

Patrick Peake, Aurora's principal, is quick to point out that some continuation high schools are little more than "holding pens" for students identified as problems. Much less frequently, there are schools like Aurora—which emphasize personal and social responsibility, high standards, and a tough discipline system

"In the beginning, we had about 25 students," Peake says. "A good number of those were heroin and drug addicts. Today, the enrollment is over 150 and many more students come to us because of the need for a non-traditional academic environment."

The rise in enrollment is not a negative sign, Peake maintains, because these are the students who would have slipped out of the system in years past. Instead, they now come to Aurora for a variety of reasons such as discipline problems, lack of academic success, or substance abuse. But the most common reason for coming to Aurora is that a student cannot accommodate to the size of the regular high school or get along with other students and with teachers.

"Kids get disenchanted with the bigger system," Peake points out, "because it is big. The system cannot hold that many high-risk kids without developing some sort of individual approach for them. In our case, we used the continuation school as a key to that approach.

"Because our students have usually had difficulty in getting along in the system, we stress the development of a personal/social conscience," he explains. A shrewd understanding of adolescents guides all instructional and curricular decisions at the school.

"Students spend three quarters of the year in heterogeneous groups, but they are not placed with their friends," he says.

Peake emphasizes that Aurora's students could easily be written off as hopeless—rejected by an educational system into which they don't fit. Instead, Aurora refuses to give up on any student.

There is no permanent exit from the school short of violence—"a weapon, for example," Peake points out. "That would be the one exception because of the safety of the campus. Our philosophy is that there is no exit. We always provide a back door for students so that they can return to the school."

Aurora's day program focuses on three learning outcomes: personal/social responsibility, communication, and thinking skills. "We focus kids on the three factors that we have found to be the most necessary for them to be successful in life, and we found those through interviewing members of our community." How rigorous is this alternative program? "Each semester, they must focus on one of the learning outcomes, always returning to personal/social responsibility. If they don't master that, they enter the Service Recovery Night School program."

Each of the three learning outcomes is tied to content standards, Peake explains. "Their projects have to focus on the particular content area in question and we have a checklist of elements of the standard that they cover in their particular project.

"How rigorous is it?" Peake asks rhetorically. "It is not close to matching the California curriculum standards. On the other hand, at graduation our students produce a portfolio of material that shows they have investigated in depth these areas and have learned to give an oral presentation to adults with confidence. They also have developed action plans for themselves, which means that they must enroll in college, technical school, or made the contacts they need to make with people who will see that they have a future. If they do not do this, they do not graduate."

Students who cannot adjust to Aurora's day program are able to enter its Service Recovery Night School Program. "In this program," Peake says, "students are not allowed to come to the day school because they haven't been able to adjust to it. But they must attend two nights per week for two and a half-hours each night. During the day, three hours a day they have to do a service project in the community, usually in a school, the hospitals, preschools, or special education centers.

There is no permament exit from the school short of violence.

Students earn the right to come back into Aurora's day program through completion of service hours, a journal, and attendance at night school. "They are not, however, allowed to be with the mainstream," Peake observes, "which as teenagers is their main need. Therefore they are motivated to work their way back into the program."

When students enter Aurora, their parents go through training simultaneously, Palicio says. "If you change the student and you don't change the atmosphere at home, it doesn't work. And if you change the home atmosphere and not the student, it doesn't work either.

"We were able to see that, so we provided parents the support they needed to be proactive in monitoring their kids. We use a project that the L. A. Police Department uses with hard-core kids. It is a very structured program with six sessions on big issues, such as gangs, alcohol and substance abuse, suicide and emotional problems, and communicating with kids. The next six sessions focus on developing a discipline plan; support groups form to help implement that plan."

This program helps parents see which of their behaviors enable their children to become behavioral problems in school. "If the kids are wearing gang clothes," Palicio says, "the parent gets rid of those clothes. Once the parents are in control, the kids see they can't get away with those behaviors. And once the kids go through the continuation school and are in control of themselves, they see that they can do something with their lives.

"It doesn't work with everybody," she adds, "but it works with a lot of people. Even the ones for whom it doesn't work see that the quality of their lives improves. Some take baby steps; some take giant steps. We tell parents that we want their kids to come back, but we want them to come back and succeed, not come back and do what they did before."

Peake makes it clear that although staff maintain a warm and caring relationship with students, this relationship has evolved over the years to avoid what he terms "enabling." He admits that his own attitude has toughened, but in a caring way.

"I used to think we were there to love the kids," he adds, "spend some time with then, and then graduate them in an unfair system. I used to think that the system was the thing that destroyed them."

Today, stiff guidelines on behavior and a policy of "tough love" make that attitude a thing of the past. "As one example, we have a zero tardiness policy," Peake points out. "If a kid is 15 minutes late to class in many schools, he stays after school. But if a person is 15 minutes late to work they don't get to make up that time. They are fired."

If students are late, they must return to Aurora with their parents and explain why they were late. "After two weeks of this policy, kids weren't late anymore—and by the end of the year, we had no truancy problem.

"We heard for years that if we held high expectations for kids they would move up to the expectations, but I didn't really

believe it. It is true, however."

High expectations and intensive contact with adults are key to the success of Aurora's program, Peake believes. "Students connect to adults in their learning exhibitions, in their service projects, and in their academic projects. If students can connect to adults, they begin to see that adults are resources, not the enemy. That is one of the key reasons this school is successful. We have taught the kids that there are adults who can take them where they want to go. Not only that, there are adults who are warm and supportive.

"Our old motto was to be their second mothers and fathers and encourage dependency. As a result, they would graduate and fail. The new motto is: We love you, we are going to challenge you, and we are going to require that you go out and find other adults and listen to their feedback so you can develop your own support system in the world instead of only relying on us."

Part of Aurora's new philosophy also relates to the length of time each student spends at the school—which is highly individual. "They don't have to graduate when they are 18," Peake says emphatically. "They have to graduate when they are ready. Under the old philosophy, we got them, we accelerated them, and we graduated them quickly. The new philosophy says that we are in no hurry."

When Aurora's students graduate, they are well-prepared for the future—and must demonstrate their level of preparation through an exit interview.

"They come to it with a three-inch binder full of their work," Peake continues, "done on both IBM and Macintosh computers because they have to be proficient with both. They show up dressed in their suits and ties, ready to take interview questions on their individual and service projects, equipped with letters of recommendation, a resume, job applications, and an action plan."

These exit interviews, Peake says

(continued on page 28...)

ACCOMMODATIONS

[walter g. secada]

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCOMMODATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WAS DRIVEN HOME TO ME A FEW YEARS AGO AS I WAS CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON THE NATURE OF MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION. A RECENT IMMIGRANT STUDENT HAD GONE TO THE BOARD IN HER 10TH GRADE GEOMETRY CLASS TO ANSWER THE HOMEWORK PROBLEM: "TWO ANGLES ARE COMPLEMENTARY [THAT IS, THEY SUM TO 90°]. ONE ANGLE IS TWICE THE OTHER. WHAT ARE THE ANGLES?" THIS TENTH GRADER DREW A RIGHT ANGLE, SKETCHED A LINE DIVIDING THE ANGLE IN 2, LABELED ONE ANGLE "x" AND THE OTHER "2x." SHE WROTE ON THE BOARD: "x + 2x = 90," AND PROCEEDED TO SOLVE THE EQUATION. IN FLAWLESS SPANISH, SHE EXPLAINED HER REASONING TO THE CLASS, HOW SHE HAD THOUGHT OF THE TWO ANGLES SUMMING TO 90 DEGREES AND SO FORTH. ANOTHER CLASSROOM OBSERVER THEN INTERRUPTED AND ASKED HER TO EXPLAIN HER WORK IN ENGLISH. A BIT FLUSTERED, THE YOUNG WOMAN RESTATED WHAT SHE HAD SAID, BUT IN ENGLISH. THIS TIME, SHE SPOKE IN CLIPPED PHRASES AND MADE GRAMMATICAL ERRORS. BEYOND CONTAINING INCOMPLETE THOUGHTS, HER COMMENTS ALSO CONTAINED SUBSTANTIVE MISTAKES THAT WERE SO SEVERE THAT, HAD I NOT HEARD HER EARLIER EXPLANATIONS IN SPANISH, I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT SOMEONE ELSE HAD DONE HER HOMEWORK.

Much too often, as in the example above, assessment tasks fail to elicit the information that their designers intend for them to provide. Standardized assessments fail to elicit valid information from minorities (especially English language learners) and special needs students more often than from other students. This differential failure would remain a technical oddity if not for the fact that educators rely on assessment information to make many decisions involving students' educations. Hence, those decisions may themselves be flawed or, what is worse, result in inequitable educational outcomes.

Responses to the problem of task failure to elicit adequate student information include those based on the task's technical characteristics. For instance, one might argue that competent performance on a task should include a student's ability to produce a specific kind of response under conditions that are identical to those under which other students provide their answers, including the use of English; this is precisely the intent of standardized assessment. The counter argument is that the *sine qua non* of a task are the ***knowledge and skills*** that are its core and that other circumstances–such as language, superficial task complexity, and time to completion–should not get in the way of determining whether or not students have and can demonstrate the task's required competencies.

To many educators, the consequences that are tied to student performance on an assessment are of greater concern than any technical issues. When the consequences are severe–as happens when grade promotion or graduation with a diploma get tied to student performance–the assessment is said to be "high stakes" (for the student). Schools or teachers

might be held accountable in some formal way for how their students perform on a test. For example, test scores for the overall school might be published in a local newspaper and, as a result, the school's reputation gets tied to how its students performed; or, teachers might receive financial rewards based on how much their students improved their test scores. Most educators would agree that there is something inherently unfair about linking such consequences to student performance on an assessment whose tasks fail to properly elicit the information that must be obtained.

STUDENT EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

One response to tests' limitations has been for schools and districts to exclude many English language learners and special needs students from being tested. The exclusion of students can be traced to many civil rights actions of the late 1970s which provided some legal safeguards in terms of how the consequences of testing should be implemented for students of different social backgrounds.

Some districts and states have instituted formal conditions that ***must*** be met before a student can be included in a testing situation. For example, some states and districts require that English language learners have been enrolled in a U.S. school for at least three years before they are assessed in English. Some special needs children are simply never included in district assessments.

Another option is to include as many students as possible in the testing situation, but not to report the results of students who fail to meet some criterion. For example, most test-scoring protocols require that a student complete a certain minimum number of items before her/his results are included. Some schools include English language learners in taking a test so that they can learn test-taking skills, but then, they systematically exclude the scores to those students from their data analyses.

One unfortunate outcome of excluding students from assessments is that the students fall out of sight and, consequently, out of mind. Student advocates have argued that schools will too often ignore their un-tested students because the school does not feel responsible for those students.

Recently, under the joint pressures of educational reform and accountability (where both students and their schools are held accountable for student achievement), the pendulum has begun to swing back so that now the pressure is to include as many students as possible in school, local district, and state accountability systems. These pressures are bumping up against counter-pressure and the inertia of traditional practice which was to exclude students. Educators and policy makers are looking at the accommodated inclusion of students as one way of balancing these countervailing forces.

THE LOGIC AND PRACTICE OF ACCOMMODATION

Ideally, if we could identify the specific barrier(s) that interfere with an assessment task's ability to elicit the information that it is meant to get at, we might be able to design task modifications–known as accommodations–which would allow us to circumvent those difficulties. Take the example of the Latina student at the start of this article. Assuming that the intent of an item is to gauge the sophistication of her reasoning and ability to solve her mathematics homework problem, a reasonable accommodation would be to allow her to answer in Spanish. Someone else could translate her responses into English thereby showing that she could solve the problem and she demonstrated some quite sophisticated mathematical reasoning in doing so. This student knew her stuff; she just could not show what she knew when made to answer using a language she had not mastered.

Butler and Stevens (1997) describe two major categories of accommodations that are used when assessing English language learners. *Test modifications* include assessing students in their native language(s), text changes in vocabulary, modifications of the test's linguistic complexity, addition of visual supports, use of glossaries (in English and the student's native language), linguistic modifications of test instruction, and the use of additional example items and tasks. *Test procedure modifications* include extra time, breaks during testing, test administration over several sessions, oral directions in the native language, small group administration, separate room administration, use of dictionaries, reading aloud of questions in English, answers written in the test booklet, and directions read aloud or explained (p. 6). Many of the procedures described by Butler and Stevens require the active involvement of a skilled adult in the testing situation.

Shepard, Taylor, and Betebenner (1998) proposed a two-dimensional 3 by 4 matrix for classifying accommodations. The first dimension focuses on the test's purpose: (1) to make instructional decisions such as what content should be covered next, (2) for system-level monitoring and accountability, and (3) for program placement and exit decisions such as the identification of students who are eligible for special education and/or bilingual education services. Shepard et al.'s second dimension describes the actual domain being assessed: (i) subject matter knowledge such as academic achievement, (ii) native language proficiency and literacy, (iii) English language proficiency and literacy, and (iv) cognitive abilities such as spatial-visualization skills and other skills related to multiple intelligences. In addition, Shepard and her colleagues describe one state's elaborate system of accommodations as including administration accommodations (for

example, oral or sign language administration of assessment in either English or another language); response accommodations by which students are allowed to respond in a medium other than what is called for by the test developer (for example, giving a response orally in English or another language for verbatim transcription from an audio- or videotape); setting accommodations through which the conditions under which a student is assessed are modified (for instance, the student is assessed individually); and timing accommodations through which time can be extended or broken up into smaller chunks.

CAUTIONARY FINDINGS

In spite of continued enthusiasm for accommodation as a vehicle for including students in current-day assessment and accountability systems, recent research has raised questions about how accommodations are implemented. For example, an often-cited study of Kentucky's accountability system (Koretz, 1997) reported that 80 percent of that state's students with disabilities were included in the state assessment–good news indeed. Moreover, students who had received accommodations outperformed similar students who had not received test accommodations. However, Koretz also found what he termed "excessive use" of accommodations especially among fourth graders and "implausibly high" average test scores for some groups of special needs children who had been accommodated. In their study of Rhode Island's accommodation of English language learners, Shepard et al. reported that, once again, accommodated students outperformed unaccommodated students. But also, they found that schools varied greatly among themselves in which accommodations they provided to their English language learners. In other words, a student's performance on a test that allows for accommodation depends on what school that student is lucky (or unlucky) enough to attend when he or she is tested–something that is not very fair.

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Assume that English language learners are given native-language glossaries to help them understand a test's words. A native-language dictionary helps only if that student is literate enough in that language to use the dictionary. If not, then the dictionary might turn into more of a hindrance than a help since the student may lose valuable testing time trying to figure out how to use something which is of limited value. Moreover, even if a student can use a glossary, its use is at the expense of time that could be spent working on the assessment.

Native-language test versions assume that the student's literacy is stronger in the native language than in English. Since so few programs for English language learners actually develop students' native-language literacy and skills, this assumption would seem valid only for immigrant or very young students. Alternatively, dual-language test versions might prove confusing to students who spent their time reading the test in both languages instead of choosing one language to work in or using the alternative language to help understand the test.

How to decide how much additional time should be given to students is also a problem. For some students, an additional hour might be just enough to compensate for the time that is lost when as they try to understand a test's instructions or to use dictionaries. But for other students, an additional hour may be too generous; and yet for others, it might not be enough.

For issues such as the above, there are no uniformly correct answers. One choice might be to set uniform guidelines that could be modified in real time. Another would be to use specially trained proctors who could help students understand the test and also monitor each individual's time needs so that they have enough time to finish a test, but no more. Solutions should be arrived at through some consensus-building but also, their reasons should explained to people so that everyone knows the pros and cons of implementing one or another accommodation. Regardless of the solution, the amount of additional time that a student uses should be noted on the test, as should any other accommodations that are provided.

Translators and special assistants who help students understand a test and its directions need specialized training to ensure that they do not give too much (nor too little) help. For instance, the word problem: "Mary has 15 toy cars and 10 of them are green. The rest of Mary's toy cars are yellow. How many of Mary's toy cars are yellow?" can be solved by some English language learners as early as first grade. Other students have difficulty understanding what is being asked. An adult might confuse this problem's intent with its solution; hence, that individual might tell a student that "they want to know how much is 15 take away 10." Such an accommodation actually changes the problem into a mere exercise in computation. A correct response would be to simplify the problem's linguistic complexity to something like: "Mary has 15 toys. 10 are green. The rest are yellow. How many are yellow?" In addition, an interpreter should be told to translate problems like the above a complete sentence at a time.

Accommodations in assessment and accountability systems are becoming an increasingly important way of ensuring that *all* students are included in such systems and hence that they are included more fully in the overall educational system. The above cautionary notes should not be a reason to abandon accommodations since the alternatives seem much worse. Educators need to realize that the technical aspects of accommodations are still being worked out and that, as is the case for virtually all educational

practices, accommodations should not be implemented in a rigid or formulaic manner. Rather, accommodations should be designed and implemented thoughtfully, with well-understood guidelines, and in a somewhat but not overly flexible manner.

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AN ALTERNATE METHOD OF ASSESSING STUDENTS TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALL

[eva m. kubinski]

HOW SHOULD SCHOOL STAFF ASSESS THE ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF A CHILD WHO IS UNABLE TO SPEAK ENGLISH FLUENTLY BUT WAS A TOP STUDENT IN HER/HIS HOME COUNTRY? HOW MIGHT THEY ASSESS A FIRST-GRADE CHILD WHO CANNOT READ A SENTENCE DUE TO A LEARNING DISABILITY YET CAN DEMONSTRATE THE SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE OF A SENIOR IN HIGH SCHOOL WHEN ORALLY QUESTIONED? HOW CAN STAFF ASSESS A CHILD WHO IS ONLY ABLE TO MOVE HIS EYES TO COMMUNICATE HIS THOUGHTS? IN THE PAST, A FREQUENT RESPONSE TO THESE QUESTIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN THAT THESE CHILDREN OFTEN DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN A STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROCESS. BUT AS A RESULT OF STATE AND FEDERAL MANDATES, THAT ANSWER IS BEGINNING TO BE HEARD LESS OFTEN.

The goal of any assessment is to determine how a student compares against a standard: either one set by a group or test developer, or against a past standard or product from students themselves. However, some students are unable to participate in large-scale assessment, either due to language proficiency or a form of disability. In the past, those students were left out of statewide or large-scale testing completely; however, more students now are included whenever possible through the use of various strategies and tools.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Wisconsin and other states have begun to use testing accommodations to allow more students to participate in high-stakes testing. By using accommodations, such as allowing increased time to take a test, use of a scribe to write down answers, or providing a reader to read instructions and questions aloud, a greater number of Wisconsin students will be able to participate in the Wisconsin State Assessment System [WSAS]. One estimate is that with appropriate use of accommodations, up to 85 percent of students with disabilities will be able to participate in assessments such as WSAS (Elliott, 1999). To provide useful information, any testing accommodations need to be used carefully to avoid invalidating or changing the assessment *[please see the article by Walter G. Secada on accommodations, p. 12].*

ALTERNATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

What happens, however, if a student cannot participate in a testing event, even with accommodations? The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction [DPI] responded to this question by developing alternate performance indicators [APIs] tied to the Wisconsin State Academic Content Standards [Standards] for use by schools to assess the two percent of Wisconsin students with severe disabilities or Limited English Proficiency [LEP] who are unable to participate in WSAS.

The APIs are a visible way, either by behavior or by product, that Wisconsin students can demonstrate that they meet the intent of a performance standard objective. APIs are sample activities developed by a group of Wisconsin educators to demonstrate how a student with a disability or with Limited English Proficiency could show they meet the intent of the academic standard. They can also be conceptualized as:

- Behavioral examples of measurable indicators aligned with Wisconsin State Academic Standards
- An alternate way to assess meeting state academic standards
- A meaningful way to assess the academic progress of students unable to participate in the Wisconsin State Assessment System
- Examples of how performance assessment tasks can be developed that are aligned with state standards

The goal of any assessment is to determine how a student compares against a standard.

- A way to assess progress in meeting IEP goals without using a standardized test
- A more "authentic" way to assess knowledge—allowing for parallel teaching procedures

The APIs are indicators specifically aligned with the Wisconsin Standards. Each standard is published as both a content standard and a performance standard that demonstrates mastery of the given content at a given grade level. Within the APIs, each performance standard includes one to three sample alternate performance indicators, along with sample activities and tasks.

When a child is ready to be evaluated with the APIs, the evaluating teacher has the option to use the sample APIs and sample performance tasks provided by DPI, or can develop his or her own as long as they demonstrate the intent of the given performance standard. The goal of the APIs is to recognize that there is a group of students who have a range of abilities not evaluated by WSAS; the indicators are samples to help teachers transition from instruction to assessment while aligned with the Wisconsin Standards. If teachers use their own APIs, they should be sure that they are clear, are appropriate for the given student, are aligned with the Wisconsin Standards, and can be observed and measured [Gottlieb, 1999].

HOW CAN YOU USE THE APIS?

Sample API for Social Studies - LEP [Draft]

Content Standard: Students in Wisconsin will learn about the history of Wisconsin, the United States, and the world, examining change and continuity over time in order to develop historical perspective, explain historical relationships, and analyze issues that affect the present and the future.

Rationale: Students need to understand their historical roots and how past events have shaped their world. In developing these insights, students must know what life was like in the past and how things change and develop over time. Reconstructing and interpreting historical events provides a needed perspective in addressing the past, the present and the future. In Wisconsin schools, the content, concepts and skills related to history may be taught in units and courses in United States and world history, global studies, geography, economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, current events, and the humanities.

Performance Standard: By the end of Grade 4 students will:	**Sample Alternate Performance Indicators:** [1-3 per standard]	**Sample Performance Activities/ Tasks:**	**Reliable and Representative Sources of Data:**
B.4.3. Examine biographies, stories, narratives, and folk tales to understand the lives of ordinary and extraordinary people, place them in time and context, and explain their relationship to important historical events.	**1.** Recognize Wisconsin people and associate them with important historical events. **2.** Recognize Wisconsin people with extraordinary biographies in Wisconsin history.	**1.a.** Create student autobiographies based on their lives in Wisconsin. **1.b.** Chart a timeline of major events of student's life in Wisconsin in order to produce an autobiography. **2.a.** List three people who played important roles in the student's local community; retell their stories.	**Example:** Timleline

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The results of the assessment are shared with a team of educators and others responsible for the student's learning. For a student with a disability, that team may be the Individualized Education Plan [IEP] Team; for a student with LEP, that team may be a group of their teachers and parents. The team will determine if the information indicates success in meeting the intent of the performance standard. Their decision will be documented and a designation of "prerequisite skills" or "prerequisite English" will be reported to DPI.

Locally, school districts can decide on another designation if they report the results to their communities. A student's success in performing successfully on the APIs will depend on several factors. The area of disability, if any, will depend on how they show their knowledge; the area of disability may affect their ability to learn new information or to demonstrate their understanding. A student's language ability will also be a factor; a student's comprehension and production skills will be factors in their performance, especially if they are LEP. Finally, the teacher's ability to assess student success meeting the alternate indicators affects the degree to which the student can demonstrate what s/he knows.

CONCLUSION

Until recently, a majority of American students receiving special education services or students identified as Limited English Proficient did not participate in large-scale assessments, such as statewide achievement testing. As a result, this group of students in schools in Wisconsin and across the United States were left out of the state-sponsored assessment process. The estimated numbers of students with LEP or a disability that have been historically excluded range from 50 percent to 100 percent (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Olsen, 1996). Reasons for this exclusion include avoiding penalizing students for their disabilities or their limited English, trying to help avoid frustrating test situations, or seeing to it that students are unavailable to participate on the day testing is held. However, by not including a group of students in the state assessment system, schools and students are not held accountable for learning. That now must change as a result of federal and state legislative regulations that affect statewide assessment systems, as well as the recognition that schools cannot be accountable for all students until all students are assessed against the state academic standards in whatever way necessary.

Schools cannot be accountable for all students until all students are assessed against the state academic standards.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the Wisconsin APIs, please contact Tim Boals at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (608) 266-5469.

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INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN ACCOUNTABILITY:

MEETING THE NEEDS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS

[carole anne heart]

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT FEATURED IN THIS ARTICLE LIES IN THE CC-VI SERVICE AREA. THIS SMALL DISTRICT ENROLLS LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN AND, UNTIL RECENTLY, IT HAD A HISTORY OF DISCOUNTING THEIR ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL NEEDS. THE DISTRICT'S PERNICIOUS CULTURE SHIFTED WHEN NATIVE AMERICAN PARENTS, WHO WERE DISTURBED BY THEIR CHILDREN'S PERSISTENTLY LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DISMISSAL OF THEIR CONCERNS, FILED CHARGES WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. AFTER NEGOTIATING STEPS TOWARDS A NON-LITIGATED SETTLEMENT WITH THE DISTRICT'S NEWLY APPOINTED SUPERINTENDENT UNDER WHOSE LEADERSHIP THE DISTRICT BEGAN ITS OWN EDUCATIONAL REFORM INITIATIVES, THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CONTACTED THE CC-VI TO REQUEST THAT IT PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE DISTRICT IN ADAPTING AND IMPLEMENTING A PLAN THAT WOULD ALSO ADDRESS THE CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUNDS OF ITS NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT POPULATION, PARTICULARLY OF ITS PRIMARY-AGED STUDENTS. CAROLE ANNE HEART, DIRECTOR OF THE CC-VI FIELD OFFICE AT UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE, BECAME INVOLVED IN THE DISTRICT'S ONGOING REFORM PROCESS. AS A RESULT OF THESE EFFORTS, THE DISTRICT IS MOVING TOWARDS PROVIDING A MUCH IMPROVED, EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE ITS CHILDREN—IN WHICH ALL EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

Our fathers gave us many laws which they had learned from their fathers. They told us to treat all men as they treated us. That we should never be the first to break a bargain. That it was a disgrace to tell a lie. That we should speak only the truth.

Thunder Rolling in the Mountains
aka known as Chief Joseph, Nez Perce

Is it true that we have the power to influence our own destiny? When circumstances seem overwhelming, do we ask "Is this a crisis?" or "Is this is a challenge?" The statistics on drop-out rates for Native American students are significantly higher than average. The rate has been reported by the *Indian Nations At Risk Report of 1992* to be as high as 35 percent in some schools. This is the highest reported rate for any minority group in the nation. If students drop out, schools must be accountable and find out why.

If the circumstance is approached as a crisis, the response is likely to be remedial. However, if the circumstance is approached as a challenge, the response is likely to be proactive. While both responses address the circumstance, the remedial response tends to be reconstructive. Either response, however, usually results in increased accountability.

One school in our region has performed the remarkable task of restructuring to meet the needs of their Native American students. What challenges did this school face in order to complete this feat? The basic issue was whether or not the school's curriculum addressed the unique language needs of the students being served.

Their situation is familiar throughout our region; a school with a predominant population of Native American students and few Native American staff and teachers. Native American staff are typically paraprofessional. Also, there is little representation on the school board and a non-Indian administrative staff. The school is generally located within the boundaries of an Indian Reservation or in close proximity to its boundaries.

The Native American parents were the catalysts for change who perceived a crisis: Their concern was that their children were not receiving an equal education. This concern was based on the fact that Native American students were a) being relegated to the lowest-functioning groups; b) not represented in high academic achievement areas; c) exhibited high absentee rates; and d) left school at an alarming rate.

The response was to restructure, reformat, and create functional outcomes in order to provide an equal education for all of its students. The school was asked to be accountable. This accountability was promoted by the administration and carried out by the teachers in partnership

with the community. The final outcome will be evident in test scores, a lower drop-out rate, improved teacher-student interactions, increased parent involvement, and improvement in school climate.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION

The education of Native children, as we now know it, has been adapted from the Euro-American model. The education of Native children prior to the arrival of the "immigrants" differed from the Euro-American model in that those Native children received an holistic education. After their arrival, Native people were forced to conform to the Euro-American model of education. The message received by Indian people was that their culture and language were "uncivilized." Native languages and culture were portrayed as "deficient" and Indians were forced to adopt a culture "superior" to theirs.

Tribal languages were displaced within two generations, which is a tribute to the learning capabilities of Native children and their parents. Many Native children who reside on reservations still speak the Native language spoken by their parents or grandparents. Even if they do not speak the language fluently they are still able to understand and communicate with their elders.

It has been a mere twenty years ago that many parents of the children now attending public schools were forced to give up their native language and adopt English as their primary means of communication. The memory of severe punishment for speaking their native language is still fresh in the minds of many parents and grandparents. This quick adaptation to the English language has, however, left an indelible imprint upon the minds of Native American students. During the transition period, the language spoken has been called "Indian English." This stage of language transition exists in almost every Indian Tribe to some degree or other.

Having been immersed in this unique method of communication leaves many Indian children at a disadvantage when they enter school at kindergarten, especially as it relates to elements of the English language such as reading, writing and social science skills. This disadvantage continues and multiplies as the child progresses to the higher grades and eventually has a bearing on overall achievement rates, social skills and drop-out rates.

In an article by Moreland titled "Persistent Issues in Multicultural Assessment of Social and Emotional Functioning" he states:

> *In the United States, race and ethnicity are highly correlated with socioeconomic status (Laosa, 1978). When this confound is controlled, apparent personality differences among cultural groups often disappear (Green, 1987). An additional layer of complexity is added by the fact that social class structure itself differs among at least some multicultural groups (Bass, 1982). Researchers need to be careful to control for socioeconomic status, while practitioners need to be skeptical of the many published studies in which the implications of socioeconomic status have not been examined.*

When teaching children of diverse backgrounds, it is crucial to teach from a cultural context they understand. When student verbal and non-verbal behaviors are misinterpreted, based upon either socioeconomic or cultural perceptions, many unintended outcomes occur. Dealing with these unintended outcomes was the challenge facing this school district. In order to be accountable to the students, parents, and the district and state standards, all available options and strategies would be meticulously examined and changed to produce a desirable outcome for students.

THE METHODOLOGY

Examining all possible factors that contribute to low academic performance is essential. The factors examined included the obvious variables over which the school system has influence such as curriculum, learning styles, instructional methods, teacher perceptions, and individuals serving as role models for students. Other equally important factors, that have an impact on student learning and achievement, are parent involvement, culture and socioeconomic status. It was determined that these complex factors explain the disproportionate representation of Native American students in special programs.

The Office of Special Education and Office of Civil Rights have articulated three factors which accurately describe the issues facing this school district:

a) students who are not served adequately or who have not received services to meet their special needs,
b) students are grouped or inappropriately labeled, or
c) disproportionate placement in special programs may be a form of discrimination.

Using these factors as a guide to remedy and improve student academic performance, this school proceeded to make comprehensive changes.

Outside consultants were contracted to assist in the assessment of needed change. Funding strategies were developed in order to improve outcomes for students. Addressing the priority of any disproportionate representation in special programs for Native students was an immediate challenge. After completing an analytical examination by this team of consultants, necessary changes were made by school administrators, teachers, parents and the Native American community.

The integral component is communication. Administrators must master the power of open communication.

The primary concern was an inconsistency in assessment tools used to place students in the gifted and talented program and in the special education program. The conflict appeared in the equitable assessment of language skills. The failure to identify accurately and address the language needs of the Native American students was a paramount concern. The Native language spoken in the homes of students was not offered as a course option by the school. Other foreign language options were, however, offered as course options.

Two problems were identified. First, foreign languages were taught in the school while the Native language was ignored. Second, students enrolled in foreign language courses were disproportionately represented in the gifted and talented program. To remedy this situation, the school decided to hire a Native language speaker to teach the Native language to the predominantly Native American student body. Other courses dealing with Native American culture were proposed and incorporated into the curriculum.

Staff development proved to be flexible and willing to change in order to meet the needs of the Native American students. Other key efforts focused on core curriculum activities such as the improvement of reading skills for the lower grades, additional staff training for teaching reading and writing skills, upgrading teacher's computer technology skills and the purchase of software for enhanced teaching.

Managing change is difficult for most organizations. The science of change has been studied and valid conclusions have been reached. Jeanie Daniel Duck in the Harvard Business Review on Change states:

> *"The goal is to teach thousands of people how to think strategically, recognize patterns, and anticipate problems and opportunities before they occur."*

The accepted process for change is to get staff to recognize and buy into the change, which means changing their attitudes and thereby change behavior and improve performance. The integral component is communication. Administrators must master the power of open communication. The school environment is a partnership forged between the teachers and the parents to promote learning. Strengthening communications between these two groups proved crucial. The administration targeted areas that neglected the unique needs of Native students and courageously made the necessary changes, assuming complete responsibility for implementation.

Fixing the obvious problems was relatively easy. Dealing with tribal language issues is a more complex issue that will take longer to address. The more subtle outcomes of producing higher achieving students, reducing the high dropout rate and graduating more Native American seniors takes longer to achieve.

What this school accomplished was to hold itself accountable to its students. It set the context for change. It required active involvement of the staff. Agreement by the parents was critical to the process. The number of Native American staff was expanded and additional courses on culture and history were offered. Extracurricular activities such as drum groups, arts and crafts and pow-wows were also supported as important activities for students. Through these efforts, the school affirms that Native American people have a rich and meaningful culture. Monitoring these changes over time will be the final determinant of success.

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Reconstitution and School Reform: Issues and Lessons

[kent d. peterson]

SCHOOL REFORM HAS TAKEN MANY FORMS OVER THE PAST DECADE, FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR NATIONAL REFORM MODELS TO STANDARDS-BASED REFORM. WHILE SOME SCHOOLS HAVE TAKEN ON NEW REFORM EFFORTS, OTHERS HAVE DONE LITTLE TO IMPROVE AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE HAS REMAINED LOW FOR MANY YEARS.

To deal with schools with large proportions of students scoring significantly below performance standards, some states and districts have taken the more drastic approach termed "reconstitution." Reconstitution usually involves several components: (1) identifying schools that are significantly underperforming on a set of measures defined by the state or district, (2) vacating (or granting the authority to vacate) staff and administrative positions, (3) sometimes appointing a new principal, and (4) hiring back a proportion of incumbent teachers and filling the rest of the positions with new staff (Doherty and Abernathy, 1998). This policy initiative has been attempted or considered in San Francisco, Baltimore, Houston, Chicago, Denver, and other urban districts (Doherty and Abernathy, 1998). Laws in several states make reconstitution a potential policy lever for many other districts.

There are several different rationales for this approach (Doherty and Abernathy, 1998; O'Day, 1998). Some believe reconstitution is used when schools have developed "toxic cultures," where neither students nor staff can teach and learn (Deal and Peterson, 1998). Reconstitution in these cases would make it possible to "reculture" the school. Others believe that reconstitution will make it possible to restaff the school with educators who have more skills and knowledge to run schools more successfully. Reconstitution in these cases would increase the school's capacity for teaching and learning. Still others believe that the threat of reconstitution will motivate educators to learn new ways to serve the students and parents of the school. In these cases educators would work harder on student learning. It is not clear whether reconstitution works in any or all of these ways or under what conditions.

In this article, we will look at features of this reform and some "early lessons."

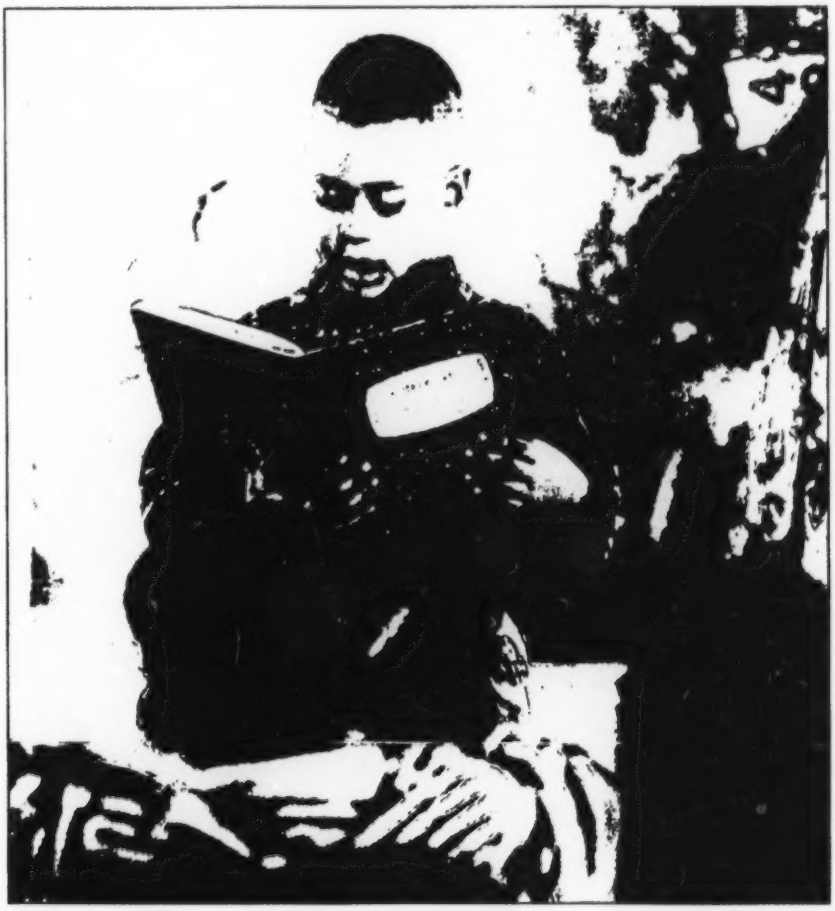
DIVERSE MODELS OF RECONSTITUTION

Overall, it is clear that reconstitution as a policy initiative is different in every setting where it has been implemented. The components of reconstitution differ in several significant ways. Reconstitution across sites varies by:

1) the choice of assessment instruments to measure student learning (norm-referenced or standards-based),
2) the criteria used to identify schools (single or multiple criteria),
3) the types of indicators of school productivity (quantitative and/or qualitative indicators of school conditions and achievement),
4) the use of longitudinal data (trends) and/or cross-sectional (point-in-time) data to assess school effectiveness,
5) the nature of the structures and procedures employed during the process of reconstitution (how and when schools are identified, the time to improve before reconstitution, the jurisdictions involved in the process—e.g., districts, states, and sometimes the courts, and the appeal process), and
6) the type, level, and quality of support during the reconstitution process (Doherty and Abernathy, 1998; O'Day, 1997, 1998). The variation in these models across districts is considerable and there is no "one best model."

Nonetheless, clearly there are a number of lessons that should be considered by stakeholders, educators, and policymakers when they consider reconstitution. These early lessons include:

1) The reconstitution process is an enormously complex and difficult process of school reform—perhaps more difficult than initially was thought. It is difficult to successfully reconstitute schools.
2) There have been extremely varied approaches to reconstitution across districts and states. This makes comparison of results difficult and simple replication ill-advised.
3) The outcomes in terms of student achievement are quite varied: Some schools improve while others remain unproductive. Reconstituting a school does not guarantee improved student learning.



4) This approach to school reform requires an enormous reservoir of resources, skills, knowledge, and leadership that the district must provide in a continuous and coordinated effort. Districts will need to commit some of their best people and many resources to support reconstitution.
5) Care and attention to each stage of reconstitution seems important if this reform is to succeed (Fullan, 1991). Schools need help while preparing to reconstitute, during the implementation stage, and, finally, in the institutionalization stage when the school is no longer under district watch.
6) Highly qualified, skilled school leadership remains crucial to success. Good principals are needed in these schools as they rebuild.
7) Before employing this reform technique, districts need to consider the range of unintended consequences from reconstitution including political conflict, lowered teacher morale, and a flood of inexperienced teachers into reconstituted schools. These can swamp any success.

Nonetheless, it is clear that some schools have been turned around through reconstitution and that some previously dysfunctional schools are now better serving their students. If districts choose to reconstitute schools, they should be willing and able to provide the resources, support, and leadership necessary to make this reform succeed.

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EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY RESOURCES

[mary chaffee & eva m. kubinski]

IN DISCUSSING EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY, KEY RESOURCES FOUND ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB HAVE BEEN LISTED UNDER THREE OF THE MAJOR FACTORS MOST OFTEN CONSIDERED IN SUCH A DISCUSSION: ACCOUNTABILITY, ASSESSMENT, AND STANDARDS. CONSIDER THESE KEY RESOURCES A STEPPING STONE TO THE PARTICULAR AREA OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY WHICH IS OF SPECIFIC INTEREST TO YOU, AS A READER, BECAUSE THERE IS SO MUCH MATERIAL AVAILABLE. ADDITIONALLY, WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT THE CC-VI WEB RESOURCE LIBRARY FOR A MORE EXTENSIVE LISTING OF WEB CONNECTIONS TO RESOURCES ON EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

ACCOUNTABILITY

NATIONWIDE ISSUES IN EDUCATION, JUNE 1997, NO. 6: ACCOUNTABILITY AND SCHOOL REFORM

[Found on the National Education Association (NEA) web site.]

http://www.nea.org/helpfrom/achieve/accountability/school.html

This article discusses accountability for student outcomes as the third component (in addition to standards and assessment) in the system called standards-based reform. The context of the discussion is framed by citing the finding in the 1995 NEA report on state accountability that "the nation [is] shifting its focus from education inputs to outputs."

CC-VI FORUM, AUGUST 1996: BALANCING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS AND DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

[Found on the CC-VI web site.]

http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/ccvi/Forums/Forum_V1_No1/

This article, authored by Martha L. Thurlow, addresses the issue that educational accountability systems must include all students regardless of the diversity they represent. When students of diversity are excluded from the accountability system, then the results of the accountability system are questionable.

CENTER FOR ASSESSMENT, STANDARDS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

[Located on the Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) #1 WebSite]

http://www.cesa1.k12.wi.us/

The purpose of the Center for Standards, Assessment and Accountability is to assist local districts, schools, and educators in the implementation of standards and assessment-led learning models based on the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards, district standards, the WSAS Examinations and district assessment models.

EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES (ECS)

http://www.ecs.org/ecs/ecsweb.nsf/

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) Web site is an excellent resource for accessing articles and reports pertaining to accountability, assessment, and standards in education. From the ECS home page, click the Information Clearinghouse button and from there the Key Issue Packets link. Select by topic the issue to review. Also, find the fourth annual report by the ECS, *Progress of Education Reform 1998*, on the status of efforts to improve the quality and performance of America's public education system.

GUIDANCE ON STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/StandardsAssessment

Guidance on Standards, Assessments, and Accountability is a document from the U.S. Department of Education to state education agencies, school districts, and schools regarding the new provisions on standards and assessments, adequate yearly progress, and accountability in Title I. It also discusses the transition period during which a state may use transitional assessments while it moves toward its final system of assessments.

INTERVENING IN CHRONICALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

[From Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders (May 1998) *U.S. Department of Education]*

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/turning/stakes.html

"Intervening in Chronically Low-Performing Schools" is a chapter in the U.S. Department of Education's *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools; A Guide for State and Local Leaders, (May 1998)*. It addresses the issue that holding schools accountable is not enough. Often, with low-performing schools, intervention is necessary. School reconstitution, as a strategy of last resort, is examined. A chart listing those states with the power to reconstitute schools or districts is provided.

WCER HIGHLIGHTS, JULY 6, 1998: KENTUCKY'S SCHOOL REFORM EFFORTS BEAR FRUIT

[Found on the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) web site.]

http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/test/pastfeatures/jul98a.htm

This article, which looks at Kentucky's Accountability Program, found that a state-level accountability program can lead to significant improvement in school. UW-Madison Education Professor Carolyn Kelley's recent studies found that Kentucky schools successfully meeting student achievement goals in the state's school-based performance award program did so by making considerable changes in curriculum and instruction.

NATIONAL CENTER ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES (NCEO)

http://www.coled.umn.edu/nceo/

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education to provide assistance in the areas of educational reform, assessment, and accountability. It is one of the best Web resources for articles, reports, surveys, and other related sites regarding the participation of students with disabilities in national and state assessments, standards-setting efforts, and graduation requirements.

QUALITY COUNTS '99

[Found on the Education Week web site]

http://www.edweek.org/qc/

Quality Counts '99 is *Education Week's* annual report on the status of public education in the United States. The report focuses on accountability as well as its annual update on student achievement, standards and assessment, quality of teaching, school climate, and financial resources. State "report cards" are available at the click of a mouse. The site is user-friendly and the report contains an incredible amount of current, indepth information.

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/oea/index.html

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Office of Educational Accountability is organized into three broad categories: Standards, Assessment, and Accountability. It is nicely laid out and offers current information—on laws, school performance reports, proficiency score standards—and much more.

RETHINKING ACCOUNTABILITY

[Found on the Annenberg Institute for School Reform web site.]

http://www.aisr.brown.edu/html/rethink.html

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University, promotes and advocates the serious redesign of American schooling. On its web site, under Institute Projects, the project entitled "Rethinking Accountability" provides an indepth piece on the process of rethinking accountability. The Boston Public Schools are part of the case studies undertaken by the Institute.

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ASSESSMENT

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FOR STUDENTS UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN GENERAL LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENTS

http://www.coled.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Policy5.html

This National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) policy directions report describes options for developing an alternate assessment for students unable to participate in the general district and state assessments that are used for accountability purposes.

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION)

[Found on the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) web site]

http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) web site is an award-winning site containing a wealth of information on bilingual education. Its section of the Online Library entitled Assessment and Accountability contains recent, full-text, online reports from a variety of institutions and researchers that cover all educational levels. It is an excellent resource to tap.

ASSESSMENT FOR AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE LEARNERS. ERIC DIGEST.

by Roger Bordeaux, September 1995

http://ericae.net/db/edo/ED385424.htm

This *Digest* examines the use of standardized, nationally normed testing in assessing the progress of American Indian and Alaska Native students. It describes studies that have shown the inadequacies of these assessment methods and describes alternatives to standardized testing—particularly performance-based assessment.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE (APRIL 1997)

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SER/ASP/index.html

One of twelve studies of education reform commissioned by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), *Assessment of Student Performance* reviews the use of performance assessment by states, school districts, and schools, especially as it relates to guiding changes in instruction and curriculum, monitoring student achievement toward desired outcomes, holding schools accountable for student achievement, and certifying student capabilities.

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EVALUATION, STANDARDS AND STUDENT TESTING (CRESST)

http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/index.htm

Run out of UCLA, the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) is one of the best sites on the Web for K-12 educational research. Its mission focuses on the assessment of educational quality, addressing persistent problems in the design and use of assessment systems to serve multiple purposes. It provides access to the *CRESSTLine Newsletter*, the *Evaluation Comment*, general interest papers, technical reports, and the *Alternative Assessment Database*. Among the many policy briefs and technical reports found on the web site we highlight the following:

ASSESSING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN KENTUCKY: THE EFFECTS OF ACCOMMODATIONS, FORMAT, AND SUBJECT

by Daniel Koretz and Laura Hamilton

CSE Technical Report 498, January1999

http://www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/TECH498.pdf

ASSESSMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

by Robert L. Linn

CSE Technical Report 490, 1998

http://www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/TECH490.pdf

THE EFFECTS OF STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT ON CLASSROOM PRACTICES: RESULTS OF THE 1996-97 RAND SURVEY OF KENTUCKY TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS AND WRITING

by Brian M. Stecher, Sheila Barron, Tessa Kaganoff, Joy Goodwin

CSE Technical Report 482, May 1998

http://www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/TECH482.PDF

PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT FOR ACCOUNTABILITY PURPOSES: TAKING THE PLUNGE AND ASSESSING THE CONSEQUENCES

by Leigh Burstein

CSE Technical Report 390, 1994

http://www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/TECH390.PDF

PRINCIPALS' VIEWS OF MATHEMATIC STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS, AND ASSESSMENT IN A CONTEXT OF REFORM

by Maryl Gearhart

CSE Technical Report 743, 1998

http://www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/TECH473.PDF

STANDARDS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY: TEN SUGGESTIONS

by Robert L. Linn

CRESST Policy Brief, 1998

http://www.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Files/PolicyPaper.pdf

THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION 1999

[Found on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website]

http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/condition98/

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Web site provides easy access to the information contained in NCES's recently released 1999 edition of the *Condition of Education*. The *Condition of Education* describes the current status and recent progress of education in the United States. This compendium volume features an overview essay and 60 indicators in five major substantive areas of education. Use the search engine to access information on assessment, standards and other indicators. Also, explore the NCES web site. It is easy to navigate and contains a wealth of statistical data.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

http://ericae.net/

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation provides extensive information concerning educational assessment and resources to encourage responsible test use. Access to reports, studies, abstracts, and articles is provided as well as links to other Web sites and list serves concerning assessment and evaluation. For those who know the topic or issue, the search engine covers not only the ERIC database but three assessment instrument databases. Be sure to check out the ETS/ ERIC Test Locator , the ERIC/AE On-line Library, and the assessment and evaluation bookstore.

EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE (ETS) RESEARCH

[Found on the Educational Testing Service web site]

http://www.ets.org/research/index.html

Educational Testing Service (ETS) Research, found on the ETS web site, provides reports on education policy topics informed by data analyses such as advances in student assessment, educational technology and graduation requirements. It is an excellent resource to check out.

MULTIPLE MEASURES: THE COMMON-SENSE APPROACH TO EDUCATION ASSESSMENT (DECEMBER 1996)

[Found on the American Association of School Administrators web site]

http://www.aasa.org/SA/dec01.htm

This article, from the American Association of School Administrators' newsletter, *The School Administrator*, reviews the national trend of using multiple measures to gauge academic achievement and educational program success.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/site/home.asp

This redesigned site provides easy access to a wealth of assessment information about the condition of education in our country, as well as student achievement results in many subject areas. Included are special audience-specific and subject area sections along with user-friendly tools.

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL (NEGP)

http://negp.gov/

The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) was set up to monitor progress towards Goals 2000 and to "work with states to develop high academic standards and assessment." This Web site provides access to a number of interesting reports and papers on

standards and assessment. From the home page click on *Publications*, click on *List of Available Reports* and click on *Standards and Assessments*.

NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY (NWREL)

http://www.nwrel.org/eval/index.html

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) has an excellent section on its web site entitled "Assessment and Evaluation." A collection of alternative assessment tools developed by NWREL can be found as well as links to other assessment/accountability resources.

PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

[Found on the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) web site]

http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/

Pathways to School Improvement contains two invaluable sections pertaining to the issue of educational accountability: "Assessment" and "Goals and Standards." Check it out!

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/perfasse.html

This *Consumer Guide on Performance Assessment* is produced by the Office of Education Research, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education.

STANDARDS

DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Putnam Valley

http://putwest.boces.org/standards.html

Developing Educational Standards is an annotated list of Internet sites with K-12 educational standards and curriculum frameworks documents maintained by Charles Hill and the Putnam Valley Schools in New York. As a repository for as much information about educational standards and curriculum frameworks from all sources (national, state, local, and other) as can be found on the Internet, it is a marvelously comprehensive resource.

CONSORTIUM FOR POLICY RESEARCH IN EDUCATION (CPRE), MARCH 1999: "DOES THE SCHOOL FINANCE SYSTEM IN TEXAS PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION?"

[Found on the Consortium for Policy Research in Education Web site]

http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/cpre/pdfs.htm

This paper explores the link between school finance and the achievement of student performance goals. Two questions are asked: What is the minimum amount of money each school district must spend in order to provide its students with an adequate education and how can state governments reform their school financing systems so that each of its school districts has enough resources to provide its students with an adequate education? The system of examining public education in Texas is discussed.

IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS: A NEWSLETTER ON ISSUES IN SCHOOL REFORM

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/IASA/newsletters/index.html

See two newsletters produced by the U.S. Department of Education: *Creating Better Student Assessments—Spring 1996* and *Standards: What Are They?—Spring 1996*. Each issue focuses on a critical education reform element, describes current thinking and activities, and offers sources of additional information.

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL (NEGP)

http://www.negp.gov/WEBPG30.htm

The National Education Goals Panel is an independent executive branch agency of the federal government charged with monitoring national and state progress toward the National Education Goals. Numerous reports are available pertaining to standards and assessment.

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

[Found on the National Academy Press (NAP) Web site]

http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/intronses/index.html

The National Academy Press (NAP) Web site provides a user-friendly, indepth introduction to the National Science Education Standards, which was released by the National Research Council in December, 1995. The *Standards* define the science content that all students should know and be able to do and provides guidelines for assessing the degree to which students have learned that content. The full text of the *Standards* has been made available online by the National Science Teachers Association at: http://199.0.2.2/onlineresources/nses.htm

RAISING THE STAKES: SETTING HIGH STANDARDS FOR PERFORMANCE

[From Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders (May 1998) U.S. Department of Education]

http://www.ed.gov/pubs/turning/stakes.html

"Raising the Stakes: Setting High Standards for Performance" is a chapter in the U.S. Department of Education's: *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools; A Guide for State and Local Leaders, (May 1998)*. It addresses the issue that holding schools accountable for student achievement has resulted in setting standards for school performance.

AMERICAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, AUGUST 1994 NATIONAL STANDARDS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN THE 1990S: ISSUES AND PROMISE

http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/abstracts/ej492307.html

National Standards and School Improvement in the 1990's, authored by D. Andrew C. Porter, assembles empirical evidence concerning the promise of setting national standards for school improvement. From this evidence, it is predicted that standards will not lead to the standardization of educational practice, stifled creativity, or minority student endangerment. Benefits, which are less easily predicted, will depend on the quality of implementation. (ERIC Abstract)

STANDARDS AT MCREL

http://www.mcrel.org/standards/?

The Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory is one of the best places to go on the web for educational resources, particularly in the area of standards-based education. Content standards and benchmarks are available as well as articles and links to other resources pertaining to standards.

TEACHERS AND GOALS 2000: LEADING THE JOURNEY TOWARDS HIGH STANDARDS FOR ALL STUDENTS

http://www.ed.gov/G2K/teachers/index.html

Produced by the U.S. Department of Education, *Teachers and GOALS 2000* describes how teachers can use the opportunity presented by Goals 2000 to step forward and lead the journey toward high standards for all students in their schools and communities.

ETS POLICY INFORMATION REPORT, MARCH, 1999: TOO MUCH TESTING OF THE WRONG KIND; TOO LITTLE OF THE RIGHT KIND IN K-12 EDUCATION

[Found on the Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center web site]

http://www.ets.org/research/pic/testing/tmt.html

This report reviews the development of K-12 standardized testing, the emerging role of testing in the standard-based reform movement, testing and school accountability, the proposal for a Voluntary National Test, and the case for high school exit examinations. Some promising testing practices are also discussed.

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EVALUATION GUIDELINES IN TITLE VII

[mary diaz]

IN THE UNITED STATES, 42 PERCENT OF ALL TEACHERS SERVE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS. HOWEVER, ONLY 2.5 PERCENT HAVE DEGREES IN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) OR BILINGUAL EDUCATION WHICH ADEQUATELY PREPARE THEM TO WORK WITH SUCH STUDENTS, ACCORDING TO DELIA POMPA, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND MINORITY LANGUAGE AFFAIRS (OBEMLA) OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. THESE STATISTICS POINT TO THE CRITICAL NEED FOR RELIABLE AND CONSISTENT INFORMATION TO ASSIST THE MANY EDUCATORS WHO HAVE LIMITED EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING IN WORKING WITH LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS—BUT LACK EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE THAT WOULD HELP THEM DESIGN THE MOST EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS POSSIBLE.

The Improving America's School Act (IASA) encourages local school districts to use new and flexible approaches that will serve *all* students in a manner that best meets students' academic needs. With this increased freedom in planning educational programs comes increased accountability. Title VII projects include a mandatory evaluation component that begins at the planning stage and continues through all reporting of activities. Until recently, however, project evaluations have been less structured than desirable. This lack of structure has led to inconsistent data collection and reporting across projects. As a result, OBEMLA received reports about individual bilingual education programs that were unrelated to each other and that shed no light either on the relative effectiveness of varying program models nor on the setting within which different models might be effectively implemented.

As the number of LEP students increases and as their impact on the provision of successful educational experiences for *all* students becomes more evident, it has become increasingly important to identify effective practices and programs targeted to these students. The collection of reliable and consistent data allows successful programs to be replicated so that others may learn from their example.

In order to assist Title VII program personnel across the nation as they prepare their reports, OBEMLA commissioned the Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations, the home of the Comprehensive Center for Region IX at New Mexico Highlands University, to develop *IASA Title VII Guidance: Writing the Biennial Evaluation Report*. This manual, created by Drs. Cecilia Navarrete and Judith Wilde, contains abundant useful information, guidelines, and checklists to aid in Title VII program evaluations. While this guide specifically addressed the required Biennial Evaluation Report, the procedures described for collecting and processing data can be equally applied to the other Annual Performance Report—the two reports required by Title VII.

Statistics point to the critical need for reliable and consistent information to assist the many educators who have limited experience and training

The Annual Performance Report, due each Summer, follows a project's year of activities. The purpose of this report, aside from helping assure continued funding, is to:

- provide background information about the program
- demonstrate progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the project
- explain why activities or objectives have not been implemented as planned
- furnish information about current budget expenditures, and
- provide any other information requested by OBEMLA.

The Annual Performance Report may include data regarding a project as it diagnoses student difficulties and/or provides professional development and other activities that may have been necessary to add to or modify the program. This report should help teachers and other staff monitor their own efforts and progress in providing high-quality educational services and professional development that will further their own long-range goals.

The Biennial Evaluation Report is mandatory after the second and fourth years of a Title VII project. Its purpose is to:

- provide information for program improvement,
- define further goals and objectives
- determine program effectiveness, and
- fulfill the requirements of the Department of Education.

The Biennial Evaluation report serves as a summary of the Annual Performance reports. It summarizes the program's effectiveness and its impact on reform within the school and the school district. Guidance provides a checklist of the required components of the Biennial Evaluation Report to assist districts in assuring that all components have been included in their report.

Guidance carefully outlines and describes both the required and the optional components of a Title VII evaluation. It offers assistance in preparing surveys to determine program effectiveness and provides excellent information regarding the choice and use of instruments. It defines commonly used terms and offers a series of visually useful "clipboard hints." Finally, it offers information on the roles of district personnel and the evaluator in preparing reports and describes both the types of data to collect, as well as methods for data collection.

An important point to remember as plans for the evaluation and annual report are developed and written is that an effective evaluation must begin with the development of a Title VII proposal. In order to prepare and collect the necessary information, the evaluator must be involved in the development of measurable goals and objectives so that s/he can begin to collect necessary data at the start of the project. OBEMLA encourages those who will consider developing future Title VII proposals to initiate the development of the project's evaluation plan at the inception of the proposal itself. Guidance also presents a *Checklist of Essential Evaluation Elements* (Table 5) to assist proposed and existing projects in carrying out this ongoing process, pointing out which elements are required and which are optional best practices.

Clearly, in order to provide the best and most effective educational opportunities for all students, educational personnel need to document carefully best practices for language minority students under federally funded Title VII projects. The flexibility encouraged by IASA and other school reform initiatives needs to be coupled with reliable information that demonstrates and shares effective efforts so that these can be replicated in other school districts. Accurate and ongoing evaluation of Title VII projects can serve this purpose and serve educators throughout the United States.

In order to support districts in the effective collection of data and preparation of evaluation reports, OBEMLA sponsored an all-day training session for Comprehensive Center (CC) Network training staff on May 25, 1999 in Washington, DC. During the coming school year, the CC-VI will conduct two full-day trainings for current Title VII grantees, people developing future Title VII proposals, and other interested stakeholders. The dates, times, and places will be announced on the CC-VI's Web site (*www.wcer.wisc.edu/ccvi*).

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The manual, Guidance: Writing the Biennial Evaluation Report, *Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs, U.S. Department of Education, is available through the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education's Web Site (http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/resource/hispanicyouth/index.html).*

It was created by the Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations at New Mexico Highlands University by Cecilia Navarrete and Judith Wilde. A link to the complete 55-page manual will is available on the CC–VI's Web site (http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/ccvi/).

[continued from page 12]

with obvious feeling, "can be very emotional. They put so much into their school experience. It is very powerful, and it demonstrates what can be done. It is so simple, if you restructure your program to match what you need to create."

CONTINUING CHALLENGES FOR CALEXICO

Despite Calexico's achievements, it cannot remain static, Palicio emphasizes. "We have been fortunate to have tremendous stability in the district in that our superintendent, our director of personnel, and I have been here since 1968. We have been teachers, coordinators, principals, and we are still here. The superintendent is a graduate of Calexico High School. I have worked with him and the personnel director for 25 years."

But Calexico's restructuring process demands, Palicio says, "that we redefine our roles as teachers, administrators, and learners. We truly believe we must continue to change our curriculum and our practices so that students are challenged to be better problem-solvers, take more responsibility for their learning, and be creative and critical thinkers."

Pearson voices his own concerns. "We need time for our staff, time to talk," he says. "I worry about the physical and emotional health of our youngsters, since we are a very poor community."

"We are not perfect," Palicio concludes. "But in another district that is 98 percent Hispanic, they could have a mentality that says English only, allows putdowns, and asks: What are we going to do with these kids? That is not our message."

[about the author]

ANNE TURNBAUGH LOCKWOOD *is an Associate Researcher with the Comprehensive Center Region VI, and its newsletter editor.*

For a complete version of this case study, please see Transforming Education for Hispanic Youth: Exemplary Policies, Programs, and Schools *by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood and Walter G. Secada, published by the National Clearinghouse on Bilingual Education (NCBE), 1999. The complete monograph, which presents case studies of exemplary sites as well as key recommendations from the work of the Hispanic Dropout Project, is available at the NCBE's Web site: http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/resource/hispanicyouth/index.html*

FROM THE DIRECTOR

[continued from page 1]

is expected of the many actors who are involved in schooling.

However, the accountability movement is not without controversy. In part, these controversies are related to how that movement began in response to dissatisfaction with public schools. Many critics of the accountability movement see it as one-sided, somewhat mean-spirited, imposed from outside or from above, and a threat to the professional status of teachers. Many supporters of the accountability movement argue that all other spheres of the workplace have accountability systems and that the "problem" with public schooling is its failure to be accountable to anyone for its products. Neither position, taken to the extreme, seems true nor very productive. Many well-meaning people are deeply concerned about schools' inability to articulate clearly exactly *what* schools should be expected to produce and what would be a reasonable check on whether individual schools succeed or fail. Likewise, teachers feel deeply responsible to their students and parents for their students' learning and achievement. There is a middle way which we try to illustrate in the following articles.

As Andrew C. Porter notes in the opening interview, accountability systems cannot be one-sided. They must include multiple and reciprocal expectations among all the actors and stakeholders. What is more, all the pieces need to work together, in synergy, if the system is to work as it should. An accountability system should be tightly focused on improving student learning. But also, it should include expectations of students, teachers, parents, and the voting public in achieving those goals.

A typical accountability argument revolves around the education of limited English and special needs students. Someone might ask: How can teachers—or even students themselves—be held accountable for overcoming barriers that are not their fault? Yet through the provision of specialized support and through test accommodations, schools and state systems are beginning to include increasing numbers of these students in their accountability systems.

At the extreme, what happens when an entire school or school system are deemed failures at their tasks? Kent Peterson's contribution points out how school reconstitution must proceed carefully and thoughtfully if it is to work. Carol Anne Heart's piece tells the true story of how a group of American Indian parents became active advocates for improving their children's inadequate schooling. And Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood's case study of an entire school district's transformation shows how intelligent, carefully planned reform can succeed when tailored to the needs of a district's student population.

The accountability movement is still in its infancy. Yet it already shows promise that it can help public schools, districts, and states clearly articulate their bottom lines, the conditions that are needed in order to achieve those goals, and the consequences that all parties should expect. Current funding for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and proposals for legislation that would continue the ESEA into the future emphasize the importance of accountability systems that help schools monitor whether they are reaching their goals and that provide the tax-paying public with evidence that they are getting what they are paying for. While sharing people's concerns and cautions about the development of such systems, the Comprehensive Center–Region VI is prepared to help its client districts and state education agencies in developing or refining their own systems. For technical assistance in this area, please feel free to contact the CC–VI or one of its field offices.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COMPREHENSIVE CENTER REGION VI

[Director]

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Any opinions, findings, or recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Education.

Readers are encouraged to photocopy this publication and/or download it from the CC–VI's Web site.

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Planning Tool for School Staff:

Accountability for All Educational Stakeholders

The following tool is intended to guide the planning of school leaders and staff as they plan an accountability strategy that is equitable and symmetric for students and staff alike.

MAKING ACCOUNTABILITY COMPREHENSIVE AND SYMMETRIC

		Completely implemented	To some extent	In development	Not at all
1.	My school or district has developed its accountability strategy with the input of representative educational stakeholders and has taken steps to ensure that both students and school staff are responsible for student performance.	❑	❑	❑	❑
2.	Instruction in my school or district is aligned to state and district standards for both content and performance; this alignment is communicated on a regular basis to all educational stakeholders, including parents.	❑	❑	❑	❑
3.	Staff in my school or district realize that they must teach to the standards adopted by my district and state; they do not indict students for their academic performance without considering their own contribution to it.	Always ❑	To some extent ❑	In development ❑	Not at all ❑
4.	My school or district is considering or has chosen incentives for staff to aid in their willingness to hold themselves accountable for student performance.	❑	❑	❑	❑
5.	Stakeholders in my school or district have discussed and continue to consider significant investments in professional development for school staff to maximize their performance in the classroom.	Always ❑	To some extent ❑	In development ❑	Not at all ❑

EDUCATION REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

		Always	To some extent	In development	Not at all
1.	Accountability measures in my school or district are tied closely to and integrated with any reform or innovation that is adopted by staff.	❑	❑	❑	❑
2.	Before selecting an educational innovation, staff and other educational stakeholders in my school or district consider carefully its implications for accountability.	Always ❑	To some extent ❑	In development ❑	Not at all ❑
3.	To ensure high-quality performance by school staff, my district and school invest a substantial portion of money in high-quality, sustained professional development keyed to the educational innovation we have chosen.	Always ❑	To some extent ❑	In development ❑	Not at all ❑
4.	Standards for content and performance in my school and district are linked closely to any educational innovation we consider and adopt; these standards are communicated clearly and consistently to all educational stakeholders.	❑	❑	❑	❑
5.	Progress in every educational innovation adopted by my school or district is measured carefully at frequent intervals; areas of student and staff weakness are analyzed and appropriate measures are taken to enhance both student and staff performance.	Always ❑	To some extent ❑	In development ❑	Not at all ❑

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

1.	In my school or district, we consider the needs of students outside the mainstream as a critical part of our accountability strategy.	*Always* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑
2.	Our accountability strategy includes appropriate accommodations in assessments for students with limited English proficiency and special needs.	*Completely implemented* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑
3.	Staff in my school or district understand the need for appropriate accommodations for non-mainstream students and have participated in necessary professional development so that the purpose of these accommodations is clearly understood.	*Completely implemented* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑
4.	Accommodations adopted by my district are reasonable and do not compromise mainstream students without special needs.	*Always* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑
5.	In addition to standardized tests, administered with appropriate accommodations for students in need of such accommodations, the accountability strategy in my school or district includes nonstandardized measures that can measure other aspects of a student's performance.	*Completely implemented* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑

ACCOUNTABILITY AND DIVERSITY

1.	The accountability strategy in my school or district is respectful of cultural diversity and holds all students to the same standards—with appropriate accommodations.	*Always* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑
2.	In my school or district, an important part of our professional development—closely tied to our accountability strategy—focuses on understanding and working with culturally diverse populations.	*Completely implemented* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑
3.	Instruction and assessment in my school or district is culturally relevant and aligned with our measures of accountability.	*Completely implemented* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑
4.	In my school or district, we have adopted non-traditional ways of communicating with parents of culturally diverse students, when necessary, to ensure that all educational stakeholders are committed to and understand the accountability strategy we have chosen.	*Always* ❑	*To some extent* ❑	*In development* ❑	*Not at all* ❑

– Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood

THE REGION VI COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FIELD SITES

THE MISSION OF THE CENTERS, UNDER THE IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOL ACT (IASA), IS TO EMPOWER SCHOOL PERSONNEL TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR ALL CHILDREN. THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS IS DRIVEN BY THE NEEDS OF THE STATES AND LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BY THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN THEY SERVE. THE CENTER SERVES IOWA, MICHIGAN, MINNESOTA, NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, AND WISCONSIN.

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